

FOOD

24 Best BBQ Joints in the U.S.

By [Jessie Fetterling](#), updated on November 9, 2022



Pecan Lodge / [Facebook](#)

Juicy melt-in-your-mouth ribs. Delicious spice rubs. Tangy sauces. American BBQ is the stuff of legend, and the way you prefer it cooked completely depends on the region you grew up in or have come to love.

That's why we're not here to name the winner (although we'd happily debate it) but instead embark on the ultimate road trip. One that takes you to America's eight best cities for BBQ and the three BBQ joints that you *must* try out in each. If you're looking for the best money can buy, these 24 BBQ joints are it. Just don't forget your sweatpants because there are a lot of good eats to be had on this journey...

First Stop: Kansas City, Missouri



Gates Bar-B-Q / Facebook

Let's start with one of the country's BBQ capitals: Kansas City. The city's BBQ consists of a variety of meats, rubbed with spices and then slathered in a tomato-based BBQ sauce. The sauce is key to KC BBQ, and every local has a favorite (ahem, [Gates](#)!).

With more than 100 BBQ restaurants in the greater metro area (on both the Missouri and Kansas sides), it's safe to say you could spend months here without having tried them all. Luckily, the city is also host to the American Royal World Series of Barbecue, the largest competition of its kind in the world, where you can sample lots of different styles at once.

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Trendiest Joint: Joe's Bar-B-Que

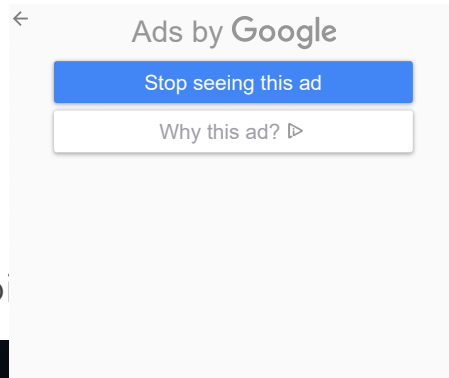


Joe's Kansas City Bar-B-Que / [Facebook](#)

If you're only in Kansas City for a day, you may want to drive over to this [famous restaurant](#) in a gas station, located on the Kansas side.

Originally called Oklahoma Joe's, this restaurant earned a reputation after its competition team, Slaughterhouse Five, won several awards at the American Royal back in the 1990s.

If it's your first time here, order the Z-Man, a delicious brisket sandwich, topped with provolone cheese and onion rings. It's so good that it inspired celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain to list the joint as one of his "13 Places You Must Eat Before You Die."



Most Legendary Jo



Arthur Bryant's Barbeque / [Facebook](#)

Now, **Arthur Bryant's** is one with serious KC roots, dating back to 1946 with Arthur Bryant who ran with the early KC BBQ crowd, including Henry Perry who is credited with bringing BBQ to the city from Tennessee in 1908.

To this day, Bryant's has barely changed, still serving up heaps of meat on slices of bread, topped with fries and then wrapped up on butcher paper for a mess of a meal that's so good Presidents Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Regan and Barack Obama have had to taste it for themselves.

Most Unique Joint: Q39



Q39 / Facebook

One of the newer joints in town, [Q39](#) is what some Kansas City Barbeque Society members claim to be the “closest to competition BBQ.” This one definitely has a trendier vibe, too, inviting patrons to sit down for awhile for a sports game or to taste the local beers.

While you can’t go wrong with the Judge’s Plate, more adventurous eaters may want to try the pork belly and sausage corn dogs or smoked beef brisket poutine (yes, it’s a thing!) for something a bit more unique.

Second Stop: Dallas, Texas



Pecan Lodge / [Facebook](#)

Distance From Kansas City: 506 miles

Drive about eight hours south to get a taste of some Texas BBQ — first stop, Dallas. Now, BBQ in Texas can vary in different parts of the state, but one thing's for sure: the meat is smoked to perfection.

And spice rubs tend to reign supreme here, with sauce often considered unnecessary.

Trendiest Joint: Pecan Lodge



Pecan Lodge / [Facebook](#)

Pecan Lodge has quickly earned itself a reputation as one of Dallas' best BBQ joints. What started as a farmer's market stand in 2010 has turned into a global sensation. Pitmaster Justin Fourton takes his work seriously, with four smokers that are watched 24/7 to ensure that temperatures stay consistent.

Just see for yourself by ordering the Pitmaster sandwich. And don't forget to order Aunt Polly's Banana Pudding — an ode to the owners' family recipes.

Most Legendary Joint: Hutchins BBQ



Hutchins BBQ / [Facebook](#)

Hutchins BBQ has been around the Texas BBQ block a time or two. Established in 1978, it started out as Roy's Smokehouse in Princeton, Texas, as a hole-in-the-wall joint connected to Roy's home. He moved to a bigger spot in the early 1990s and did business as usual until retiring in 2006 when his three sons took over.

Come hungry to either one of its McKinney or Frisco locations hungry because the all-you-can-eat option will give you a chance to chow down on everything from brisket to pork ribs and house-made sausages.



Most Unique Joint: Cattleack Barbeque



Cattleack Barbeque / [Facebook](#)

This [North Dallas spot](#) has been known for its fall-off-the-bone meats ever since opening in 2010. Don't miss the beef rib, which averages about 2 pounds and can feed about four people easily.

What's also great about this place is the sides, including the hatch chili mac and cheese, apple broccoli salad, burnt end beans and cheesy chipotle corn — to name a few.



Third Stop: Austin, Texas



Terry Black's Barbecue / perfekto209 / [Facebook](#)

Distance From Dallas: 195 miles

We're going to be honest, we saved some of the best Dallas BBQ spots for this section because some of them started in Austin and the surrounding areas, especially the BBQ mecca of Lockhart, dubbed the "Barbecue Capital of Texas."

After all, it's in this part of the state where Texas BBQ originated way back in the early 1900s.



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